PUTNAM'S MAGAZINE.

ORIGINAL PAPERS

ON

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, ART,

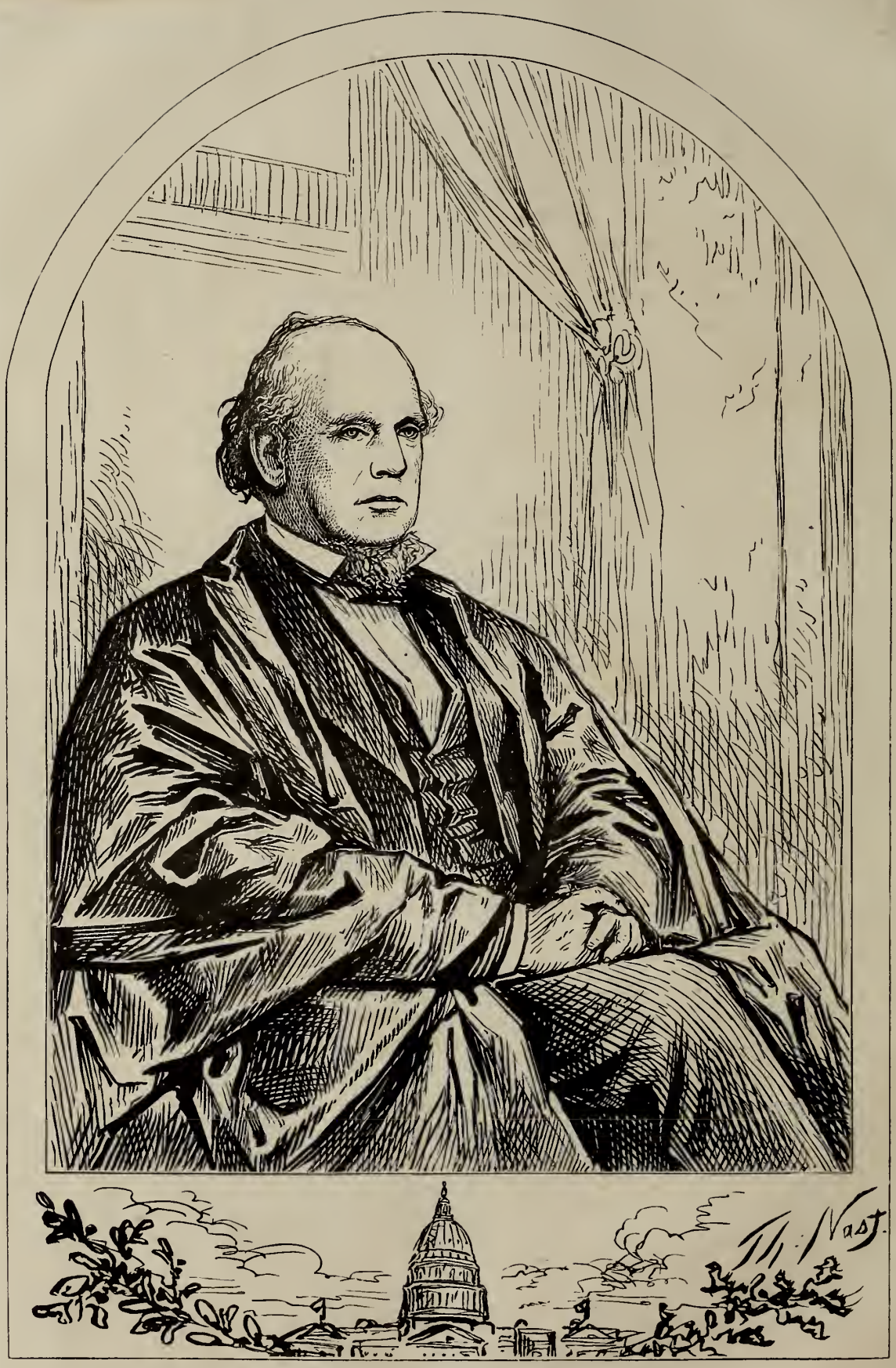
AND

NATIONAL INTERESTS.

NEW SERIES.

SIXTH VOLUME. JULY—NOVEMBER, 1870.

NEW YORK:
G. P. PUTNAM & SONS, 4TH AVE. & 23D ST.
1870.



THE CHAIR OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE: SUPREME COURT, U. S

Drawn and Engraved for PUTNAM'S MAGAZINE.

MR. LINCOLN AND THE PETITIONERS.

A RECORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE CHAMBER.

IT was the custom of Mr. Lincoln, during the later years of the Rebellion, to hear petitions at certain hours of the day from all who chose to present them to him—the formality of an introduction from some Member of Congress being the condition on which they entered the Executive Chamber.

The writer of this record pleaded for the discharge from military service of a brother who had entered the army at fifteen years of age. The petition was granted, and the President kindly asked if he could do any thing more for her. She asked if she might be present at some of these public interviews, and write notes of them for publication. He answered that she could do so.

Of many hundred petitions she has selected a few only, and has endeavored to present a faithful record of what she actually saw and heard on the occasions described.*

All day long President Lincoln had received petitioners, and still they came. He could hear the murmur of voices in the outer rooms, as they were anxious to be admitted; yet, he *must* rest for a few moments.

"Tad, my dear son, go to your mother; you must be tired here."

"No, no, papa; I don't want to go now—I want to stay and see the people." And he forced his hands down deep into his pockets, threw himself on the floor under a writing-desk which stood near his father, and, settling his head on a cushion, continued: "Ain't you tired of folks, pa?" . . .

The little bell which the President sounded—a signal for the doors to be opened—remained unrung, and he sat with his hands clasped together and his head drooping forward.

His little son moved softly from the room, returning in a few moments with a sad-faced woman, who held an infant in her arms. The President motioned her to a chair, and she modestly stated that she had come from a town in the far West to plead for the life of her husband, who was sentenced to die in six weeks for desertion.

"He ran away from his regiment, then?"

"No, sir; but they think he did."

The President frowned, and shook his head rapidly from side to side.

"Of course, madam, *you* think that he did not."

"Oh, sir! oh!——" And she began to cry aloud, the baby joining the chorus.

The President seemed much annoyed, but, turning to her, kindly said:

"If you can prove to me that your husband did not run away from nor desert his regiment, I will have him pardoned. Will you go on with your story, and stop your crying?"

"How kind you are, sir!"

A faint smile played upon the President's face, as he answered, "Please go on with your story."

She told him she was dangerously sick, and her husband, hearing it from a comrade, went home, about three miles from the camp. The next day he was seized as a deserter, and dragged away. As soon as she could walk a little, she had gone to the officers to plead for him, but they would not listen to her. She was sick after that long walk, and as soon as she could get up again she had started for Washington.

"It was a long and tiresome journey," he said, sympathetically.

"Yes, sir; but, someway, I felt, if I

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* The authenticity of these "notes" is vouched for by the writer, whose good faith is well endorsed.

could only see you and tell you, that *you* would believe my story. I have no letters to speak for me, only this one," moving her hand towards her pocket.

The President shook his head. He was twisting a piece of paper over and over through his fingers. Lifting his eyes suddenly to her face, he asked:

"Who is that letter from?"

"It is from a kind minister; I asked him to write it. He said you did not know him, and would in all probability not read the letter; yet, if it would be any comfort to me, he would write it."

"Let me see it."

As he bent forward to take the letter, the infant seized his hand. The President patted the little hands and face, and then leaned toward the light to read.

How anxiously the woman watched him! But his countenance gave no indication of his thoughts. He folded the letter carefully; slowly he handed it back again, saying:

"I am satisfied with it. I believe your story. I shall pardon your husband."

The baby looked up steadily at him; the woman arose, as she exclaimed:

"Oh, Mr. President, how can I thank you!"

"Take this note to the War Department, and they will give you a paper of release for your husband from the charge of desertion. It will make your journey home more comfortable. Good night."

"God bless you!" she answered, and was gone.

The President struck the little bell, and a tall usher opened wide the door, until the room was filled. Some of these petitioners were insolent beyond human endurance; some were silly to excess; some were ludicrous in their pompousness, displaying piles of letters of introduction, which the President would not look at. They would, however, persist in their endeavors to make him look at *such* letters from *such* persons.

The President soon became exasperated, as he listened to one and another. In vain he shook his head and stamped his feet, and brought his hands violently down upon the table, telling them that he *would* not and *could* not listen to such petitions. They, with an assurance never to be imagined, would still go on.

Men with defiant faces, men whining and pleading, and forward women, grasped his arms to arrest his attention. His patience with such rudeness was wonderful. If he expressed contempt for affectations, he also did not forget to respect modesty and real sorrow when he met it.

Again the little bell was rung, and again the room was filled. Those who had just gone out muttered their dislike for the good man who listened from early morning until late at night to people of every grade.

Often the President was grave to sadness. For hours in succession he expressed no anger, no mirth. Petition after petition was presented in rapid succession. It was the same story of sorrow—of fathers, brothers, and husbands in prison, each pleading for *theirs* to be the first released in the exchange of prisoners. Some had dear ones dying in camp, beyond the lines; they were begging to go to them. Hundreds had made the same request.

"Oh, let us go to them—only let us go!"

There were bands of poor, oppressed sewing-women stating their wrongs—Peace commissioners, and Southern refugees.

Towards the close of the day the President was alone for a few moments. The door opened a little, softly, as though begging an invitation to open wide. A merry face and broad shoulders were visible; and, to the President's cheerful "Come in," the whole man entered.

"Nothing to do, eh?" said the President, lifting his eyebrows, and assuming for an instant the most mirth-provoking attitude.

"That's it—just it, Mr. President, your honor! Ushers and watchers have only to stare at each other. I thought

I'd show my better bringing up;" and he apologized for laughing and laughed for apologizing, and the President helped him.

"So you thought you'd show your better bringing up—show off by coming up here to disturb me! Maybe you're afraid I rest too much—get too much sleep, eh?"

"Oh, no, Mr. President!" and the speaker shook his white head, adding, "You will be so funny! Only I thought I'd just step up and tell you that there is just one solitary lady wanting to speak to you, and you know——"

"No, I dont know."

"And you see——"

"No, I don't see."

"Beg pardon! but I meant to say, that I could not very well let her go away without telling you."

"Where is she?"

"Outside, in a carriage. There is an old black woman with her, who keeps telling her that 'Massa Linkum will sure for sartin' let her come up.'"

"Yes, yes—of course; I must not refuse any person;" and the President laughed again in a weary fashion. "Fetch her up," he added, an expression of fatigue sweeping over his face.

The little man soon returned, saying:

"She won't be fetched. This is her name"—handing a card. "When I told her you said she could come right up, she turned pale, and trembled like a leaf, and said, 'Please ask the President if I may come in the morning, and I will be deeply grateful to him.' The black woman said she was 'jes' done ober trablin' in dem ingines. She'd be right pert in de mornin', and tell Pres'ent Linkum all 'bout it.'"

"I'm disengaged now," answered the President, with a frown; "but to-morrow—what do I know of to-morrow? Tell her to come right up. No—tell her to come to-morrow morning at precisely eleven o'clock."

"Deeply grateful!" laughed the President, when the door closed. "I hope there will be no more women here to-night," he added, wearily.

But there *were* women. Each set of petitioners were women, from first to last.

Many times the President started to go to his private room; but sad faces pressing up the stairway stopped him as he was crossing the hall, and he went back again.

"Do, kind President, grant my request!"

The woman's voice was very plaintive, and large tears were falling, but she made no *sound* of crying.

"No, no, I cannot! I cannot, good woman—I cannot! I might grant such requests a thousand a-day. I can't turn the Government inside out and upside over. I can't please every body. I must do my duty—stern duty as I see it. Nobody wants their friends drafted—nobody wants them taken as deserters. He should not have been absent so long; he should not have taken upon himself the appearance of a deserter. How do *I* know—how does *any body* know—how does the War Department know—that he did not intend to stay upon the boat where the soldiers found him? How does any body know that he didn't *think* about his furlough being ended? Didn't *think!* That was his business to *think.* I am sorry. Every body ought to be sorry for those who do wrong. When he knew the laws, why did he break them? When he knew the penalty, why did he bring it upon himself? You plead for him, and tell me how upright he is. That's all very well. It is easy for us to overestimate the goodness of those we love. You are his neighbor. It is very kind in you to come so far and plead so strongly; but—I can't—I can't do any thing for you!"

"Please, President Lincoln!"

"No, no! no, no! I can't—I won't—I won't!" and he sprang to his feet, but in an instant resumed his former position in his chair, and leaned forward to snap the little bell.

"Oh! oh!"

It was a sound of intense grief, disappointment, and surprise, all mingled

together; coming up so from the heart as this peculiar sound did, it arrested the hand upon the bell, lifted the eyes that were growing cold and stern to the pleading face of the woman before him. She had left her chair, and stood so near that her clothes brushed against him. Heavy were the lines upon her face—lines of care and sorrow; earnest were the tear-dimmed eyes.

"Do, kind sir, consider my case a moment more—oh, President Lincoln! Remember, you were poor once—and—and——"

"Had no friends, do you mean?" he interrupted, almost scornfully.

"No—oh, no!—had a *few* friends—tried and true friends, who would never forsake you. Only one of them I know—*one*, who is alike a friend to you and to me. For his sake—for our dear Lord's sake—grant my petition!"

There was a striking solemnity in her whole attitude; and the President turned very pale, his eyes misty, sad, and then sadder, as he repeated, slowly and reverently:

"For our dear Lord's sake!"

"Here are three hundred dollars; it was made up by his neighbors. Couldn't you save him from an ignominious death, which he does not deserve?—no, he does not deserve!"

"Take back your money!" cried the President, throwing away from him her extended hand. "Take it back! I do not want it!"

Only an instant his hand and voice were raised, and then he resumed, kindly:

"I shall not have your money, good woman; the War Department will not have it. Take it back where it came from; and you shall take back his release. Your petition shall be wholly granted."

"Oh, President Lincoln! I believe you *are* a Christian. I thank God for it. I will pray for you every day with my whole heart."

"I have need of your prayers; I have need of all the prayers that can be offered for me."

"Oh, Mr. Lincoln, that is the Christian spirit—that is faith in Jesus! Oh, let me hear you say that you believe in Him!"

"I do," was the solemn answer. "I believe in my Saviour."

And when she arose to depart, the President also arose and opened the door for her, and led her through the outer room and across the hall to the head of the staircase, and shook hands, said "good-by," and went back again to receive more and still more petitioners.

It was past three o'clock; the Executive Mansion was silent and dark, with only the shaded light beside the President, as he sat with folded hands and mournful eyes alone.

"Mr. President, your Honor," said a languid woman in a languid voice, opening and closing her pale-blue eyes, "Mr. President, your Honor," she repeated, with a slight emphasis, and then, as though it were the last effort she could ever make, succeeded in saying again, "Mr. President, your Honor."

He regarded her with an amused air, and said, "My name is Mr. Lincoln—Abraham Lincoln. I suppose you call me 'Old Abe' when you're at home."

She dropped her head and raised her handkerchief to her face, heaving the folds of it with a deep-drawn sigh, as in one small eye one small tear stood irresolute, and she murmured, "How you mistake me, honored sir!"

She paused a moment to recover from her emotion, and another woman, less delicate, pushed her way up, and, with a stout voice and important manner, began to tell her qualifications and show her certificates, and wished to have a place given her in the Treasury Department.

"I'd have a different order of things there, Mr. President. I could do the work of two, and do it well. It's a bad thing," she went on, "to have so many young girls there; it's a crying shame—it's a disgrace. You ought to turn them all out, and put in their places persons of my age."

Before the President could answer, a very tall man stumbled over the feet of

two or three, and, as he picked himself up and his scattered papers, he exclaimed, eagerly:

"Look at these, Mr. President—read all these letters; they will tell you that I am qualified for a high position;" and he stumbled again, in his hurry to get up to the President.

"I need not look at your letters; you speak for yourself, sir. It was a waste of time for you to get these letters."

"Won't you read them, Mr. President, your Honor?"

"No, sir. We have enough paymasters, that are known to us—enough, sir—enough; we have more of *them* than we have money for, and, out of charity to taxpayers, I ought to dismiss about fifty of them."

"It is an important thing to have a man you can trust, Mr. President—one who is perfectly honest. It is an easy matter for money to get lost, if in the hands of easy, careless people."

"Yes, it certainly is; and, judging from the manner in which these precious letters of yours have been flying about, I should say Government property would be very, *very* safe with you."

"But there is excuse for me now, sir. Time is very short with me."

"Time is short with all of us—or at least we ought to consider it so. No, sir; I can give you no appointment."

The man began to tell the President that he would never regret it; he would see how faithful he would be, and he would be satisfied that he was better fitted for paymaster-general than the one who held the position now.

"Oh, you wish to be paymaster-general! Well, well! you wish me to turn out the man I *do* know, and put *you* in his place, whom I don't know! You may go, sir."

The President frowned, and waved his hand toward him.

"And *you*," he said, turning to the woman with a stout voice, "you can't have an appointment. I am sorry so many young girls are in the Treasury Building; but that is something over which I have no control."

"And *you*, madam," turning to the languid woman, "you have not yet stated your petition."

Another sigh, and then, as though reinforced by sudden vitality, she produced a parcel of letters, saying:

"Read these, sir; they can tell you who I am. I am too timid."

"That's nothing to me," he answered, sharply.

"Just read them, sir."

"I can't; I have no time."

"They are from head people at the South."

"I have no doubt of it."

"They plead for me. I have no confidence in myself."

The President was getting very much annoyed, and shook his head from side to side, as he always did when he was out of patience.

"If you can tell me, madam, what you wish, I will listen; if not, I will go on with the others."

"Read this one," she said, picking it out very carefully.

"No; I cannot." Then, suddenly looking up with an odd smile, he asked: "Have you one from Jeff. Davis?"

She did not see the expression of the President's face, and she replied, in a faint voice, with her eyes cast down, "I have not, but I can get one."

"Oh, don't put yourself to that trouble; I can know as much from you as from him. I'll take your word for it that you *can* get one." And the President's sleeves shook a little. "Please go on and tell me your story."

"Well—it is—it is—of great account to me. It's about—about my poor cow—which your cruel soldiers killed, and—and—I want the Government to restore the loss—to buy me a new cow."

"I am sorry for your poor cow; but we cannot buy you a new cow. I've had several cow-petitions. I expect next to have some person bewailing the loss of a cat. I have plenty of spare time, of course—have nothing to do, and ought by all means to see that every loss is made good."

"I'd like to go home," the woman said.

"I am perfectly willing that you should, madam."

"But how can I go, with my petition refused?"

"I cannot grant it," frowned the President.

"I supposed you were a kind-hearted man," persisted the *timid* woman.

"I'll not listen to you!" he said, loudly, calling forward some others.

"You are just about as much of a gentleman as I expected to find you," added the woman, as she flouted out of the room. * * * *

There was some confusion among the next set of petitioners; for one singular-looking individual found much trouble in getting a seat to his liking, and, being rather tall and rather awkward, and very stiff, had much difficulty in assuming a position.

"How are you, my good fellow?" asked the President, shaking the stranger's hand warmly, adding, with a hearty laugh, "It's just the weather for rheumatism."

"Ah, sir," answered the stranger, with a mysterious air, his zigzag mouth zigzagging at a rapid rate, "Oh, sir," he repeated, in almost a whisper, and with his finger lifted, probably to inspire awe, "I have come on a serious errand —an errand which involves the whole nation." And then, rolling his dull eyes, he continued, in the same mysterious manner: "I want you to listen to me, and do exactly as I say; for I have had a vision——"

"Of angels?" interrupted the President.

"Well, I can't say as to them being exactly angels; but they *be* disembodied spirits—Washington, and some of the Presidents. Washington sent a message to you."

"Ah?"

"Yes, he did. But first, before I tell you, I must sound you, to see how deep your faith is. If you have no faith in Washington, why, I can't give you any."

"I *have* faith in him, of course," said the President.

"Then you will believe just what I tell you?"

"That's a *different* thing. You are very honest, no doubt, yet you may be mistaken. I do not believe any messages come from another world, only as our own souls tell us. If there is any thing for me to know, my soul will find it out. Perhaps I will not listen to my soul; then I must suffer for it. Perhaps you will not listen to your soul; then you will suffer." * * * *

A Catholic priest entered, with two women. He looked at the writer with a face which plainly said he would rather she would not be there. She moved from the desk toward the door. The President waved his hand, saying, "Come back; I do not wish you to go."

The priest, turning to the President, said:

"I should like a private interview."

"I do nothing privately," was the calm answer; "all I do is public;" and he gave the signal for more petitioners, upon whom the priest looked with unconcealed anger, and to the President said, pompously:

"Then we are to have no hearing?"

"Certainly, you shall be heard. I will listen to you now."

"That will not do. I wish to see you alone."

"I can only tell you, as I did before, that I do nothing privately," answered the President, coldly.

The priest angrily rose and left the room, followed by the two women. The President went on with his work, unruffled. He was quite used to all sorts of addresses, manners, and degrees of respect.

The last of these petitioners was a young girl of singular beauty.

"I cannot let you go down there," said the President, dwelling sadly upon his words. "*How* can I?" he asked, looking up at the sweet face, so earnest and truthful, and the deep, spiritual eyes trembling with heavy tears. "I cannot let you go, and I cannot refuse you. What *shall* I do?"

"Let me go there," she pleaded. "I am not afraid. God will take care of me."

"I don't know—I don't know," he said. "Your faith is beautiful—but I don't know," he added, in a low, sad tone. Then, looking up sorrowfully, he continued, "There is not a woman down there."

"I know it," she answered, thoughtfully.

"Are you not afraid—not the least afraid?"

"No, sir; I am not afraid. I have trusted our heavenly Father many times before, and He has never forsaken me."

"And He never will!" exclaimed the President, springing to his feet. "No, my child, He never will." And, drawing a chair close to the fire, he went on: "Come, sit here, until you are quite warm. I will write you a pass. You shall go to your father."

Then, as though he felt pained at seeming inquisitiveness, he stopped suddenly, when just upon the verge of asking something; but the interest he felt in the petitioner prevailed, and he asked if she were fully prepared for her journey.

"Yes, sir; I have plenty of money. If money could make the heart glad, I have enough; but I have no mother, and my father is perhaps dying. I cannot stay to get warm—I can *never* get warm. Good-by, President—kind, good President Lincoln! I shall never see you again in this world; so shake hands with both of mine."

A moment more, and she had gone.

The President leaned forward, touched the bell, and the room was again filled. * * * *

The conversation turned to Mrs. Lincoln's fear that some of the Southern women might have hidden weapons to take his life, and it was her earnest request that women should not be admitted, except in company of gentlemen known to the Executive Departments.

The President answered, with much animation, that he did not feel afraid, and then he added, solemnly, "I do not consider that I have ever accomplished any thing without God; and if it is His will that I must die by the hand of an assassin, I must be resigned. I must do my duty as I see it, and leave the rest with God. I go to amusements very much against my inclinations. I go simply because I must have change. I laugh because I must not weep; that's all—that's all." * * * *

"You take up too much time," said a woman, pushing, and stepping in front of another. "I will talk to the President *now*, and then you can finish what you have to say. "Mr. President, your Honor, my husband lost a limb in this last battle, and I want the War Department to settle a pension upon him without delay. I believe in 'first come, first served;' and I want my son to have a position in Washington, if it is no higher than clerk in the Treasury Building. Only two petitions I ask of you. I am in a hurry, for every day I spend in Washington costs me five dollars. I have been here eight days, and, because of the insolence of your ushers, I could not get up to speak to you before. Couldn't you teach them how to treat a lady? It's a great disgrace to an establishment to have saucy servants." Then, in a higher key, she went on: "Only a pension for my husband, and a position for my son. He is just like me—he will repay you for all you can do for him. I have brought him up never to be under obligations to any person."

She paused to take a good long breath, and the President interrupted her with:

"I can do nothing for you, madam."

"Not give my husband a pension?"

"No; the War Department will attend to that."

"Not give my son a position?"

"No, madam."

Her countenance was expressive of her anger; but the President bowed her and her indignation from the room. Once she turned in her exit, saying, "I am proud and sensitive, or I would give you a piece of my mind."

A singular specimen of humanity

next came forward, entering the room alone.

"Mr. President, your Honor, will you give me a position in one of your hospitals, as nurse? I am a doctor—a clairvoyant."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; I am ahead of many others, and just now, with these *natural* eyes of mine"—lifting her hand toward two parti-colored, stony-looking orbs—"with these eyes I can see right into your heart and liver and lungs; and what do you think I might see with my spirit-eyes?"

"I don't know, I am sure."

"No, sir; of course you don't know. It isn't *given* to you to know. Your lungs and heart are all right, but your liver is in a sad condition. I can give you a prescription that will make you a well man, and make you live to a good old age. I want to get into a hospital, for it is an extensive field for my talents, which will expand as I exercise them. I have been sick for years and years; I can sympathize with sick ones. I raised myself up from a bed of suffering to perform my mission. Have you a place for me, do you think?"

"Well, no; I think not," answered the President. "You know rather too much for a hospital."

"Mr. President, your Honor, I have come from the State of New York," said a man with wonderful physical development. "Mr. President, your Honor," he continued, with a flourish of his cane, "I have brought a complaint against Governor S——. He takes no interest in these exciting times. He takes no notice of petitions presented to him. He makes no effort to bring things to a focus."

"A focus!" exclaimed the President. "I am glad he is so sensible; for it would take forty lifetimes to do that. Allow me to say, sir, that I do not wish any complaints against your Governor. Go home, sir—go home, and do not molest me." And the President went on with the other petitioners, who were scarcely dismissed before the room was again filled.

The clairvoyant came in a second time on tip-toe, and her voice was soft as a peacock's. Her light-blue eye was fixed on vacancy, as she approached the President, saying:

"Kind sir, I believe that you will change your mind about interesting yourself in getting me a position, when I tell you that I have had a vision. I have seen and talked with those who occupied this mansion before they took their departure from this gross world to that region of perfect loveliness—that region to which I lift my eyes—to which my soul goes every night only to return each day to my mission here—my mission, to heal the sick. A few manipulations with these hands"—displaying monstrous specimens—"a few manipulations will cure disease. I can cast out evil spirits. I can lift up the weak and drooping. And, in my vision, the great doctor who has control of my gifts told me to come to you again. I do not expect the world to praise me, for I am not of the world. I find my comfort with those beings with whom I commune." Here her *blue* eye, more susceptible than the gray one, shed a solitary tear.

The President said: "Well, don't tell me any thing more. I am only a poor, weak mortal. I can't stand it—I can't, indeed."

"Oh, I don't propose to rub *you*," she answered, solemnly. "I want a position in one of the hospitals."

"Well, I tell you confidentially," he replied, dropping his voice, and moving his head sideways with his oddest of odd smiles, "I tell you, good woman, those fellows at the hospitals are a rough set; it would take forty such kind and considerate persons as you are to rub faith into one of them; and, of course, if they had no faith, you could do them no good."

"That's true, sir; it all depends upon their faith. Without it, I could not help them."

"Then do not waste your time in an unsuccessful attempt."

"I *am* sensitive," she continued, sorrowfully. "I am *very* sensitive; per-

haps I could not survive the hospitals. I believe I will go home." And the blue eye and the gray eye looked at the President kindly, as she extended her prodigious hand.

A clergyman pleaded for permission to cross the lines—to go down among the prison-pens.

"You shall go," answered the President, extending his hand to him. "It is a perilous work," he added, looking up at the calm, intellectual face, and feeling the influence of those sympathetic eyes. "I can't exchange these poor prisoners half fast enough. I have great faith in those laboring for them; but what can a few do? Lee can help them.—May you send this letter to him? Of course, you may, Miss W——. What have you written?—Very well—just to the point! If Lee can't get food for the prisoners, he can let them go."

"He says he has wept tears of blood over this terrible Rebellion; but he could not fight against the State in which he was born."

"That's all bosh!—fight against his State! If a man is born in a bad State, the best thing for him to do is to get out of it as quickly as possible."

A young girl who had much trouble to get an audience, at last succeeded.

She begged to go to her brother, who was reported very sick. She told the President that Senator ——— said he could not introduce her, but he would get somebody else, for there was a feud between the President and himself.

"A feud!" laughed the President. "Well, we are a little out on politics, and that little 'outness' has detained you. Perhaps it is for the best—who knows?"

The room was quite full. A soldier, wan and lame, pleaded for eight weeks' furlough to go home and get strong. The young girl uttered a cry of surprise.

"My brother!—my dear brother!"

The President gave him a furlough of three months.

The petitioners came and went until far into the night. Their pleadings were the same heard thousands of times before. To each one the petition was new and all-absorbing; to the President, only the echoes of the vast army already gone.

Often persons pushed themselves into the Executive Chamber solely to irritate the President. Many of these were women who sympathized with the Rebellion, and their elegant courtesy (?) of manner was really amazing. Such an one had kept her chair during the going and coming of five or six relays of visitors, watching each as they presented their claims, following them with her eyes to the door, and then staring at the others. The President, annoyed at her presence, said, rather sternly, "Have you a petition to present?"

She lifted her eyes in a peculiar manner, with an arrogant expression, but she only said, "Yes, sir."

The President said, "It is time you told me what you have to say; you have been here a good while."

"Yes, sir," she replied, brightly; and, confident that he had not gained this time, folded her hands with an air of perfect satisfaction.

"Will you give me your errand, or shall I go on with the others?"

"Yes, sir," and coolly stroked her muff.

The President jerked himself in his chair, and went on with the rest. These had all gone, and still she sat there.

"Shall I talk to you *now*, or do you intend to stay all day?" he exclaimed, in a voice which would frighten any ordinary person.

"Yes, sir." And the brazen woman actually smiled at him. He snapped the bell, and the room was filled. Her presence was almost insupportable. It was almost night. Silent contempt, or expression of anger, were alike unavailing. For more than an hour the President had ignored her presence, but at last said:

"Will you, madam, prepare to give me your errand, or leave me alone?"

"Yes, sir," was the unblushing answer.

The President groaned, shook his

head from side to side, stamped his feet, and, bringing his hand down heavily upon the table, cried, "I will call some person who will escort you from the building."

He moved toward the door.

"Yes, sir," said the amiable lady; and, agile as a cat, she sprang in front of him, and passed out of the room.

"President Lincoln, I have a very gifted daughter," said a silly-looking woman. "She is an authoress, and has been ever since she was seven years old."

"Ah, indeed!"

"Yes, sir; and the publishers have a game of keeping her writings until we forget all about them, and then publish them without giving her any remuneration; and she always marks the price upon the first page. I have a piece with me now—it is a story—a story in one hundred and twelve chapters. Will you read it, and give me your opinion? Please write me a note," she added, quickly. Giving the President not an instant to reply, she went on: "If you write me a note, it will have weight with the publishers, and——"

"If the manuscript," interrupted the President, "has merit, there is no need of any note. If it has no merit, all the notes in the world would do it no good."

"Oh, it *has* merit!" replied the woman, assuming an indignant air, "it *has* merit! My daughter is a genius; but I thought it would be better to have a note from you. Every body has recommendations nowadays. Just read a little," she added, coaxingly. "It is very fascinating," she went on earnestly. "Won't you read it?"

"I can't; I don't like novels."

"Novels! sir, it is not a novel; it is a story. I would not allow *my* daughter to write a *novel*. I am a Christian. This is a little girlish, thrilling story. It displays a knowledge of history *far* beyond her years." (And a good deal more of the same sort.)

A young man desired a clerkship. He was sure he would be made for the world if he had a position in Washington.

"You are mistaken, young man," the President answered; "you are mistaken. What you ask for would ruin you. No, no; go home, and do any thing there that comes to you, rather than be deluded by such false ideas. Washington is no place for a young man to come to from a good home."

"I am very steady," answered the young man, modestly.

"That may be; but this is no place for you. Temptations abound here. Believe me to be your friend, young man. Take my advice, and go home."

Seeming much disappointed, he gracefully bowed to the President as he moved backward from the room. The President, pleased with his manner, said, as the petitioner's hand touched the door:

"You will thank me, three years from now; yet, I know I seem unkind to you—very unkind."

"It does seem splendid to have a position in Washington," was the earnest answer.

"Three years added to your present good sense will reveal to you the quicksands from which you will be saved, by going *now* directly to your home. Will you go?"

"Yes, sir."

The President was speaking of sudden death.

"I believe you are ready to die at any time," said a friend to him.

"No, I am not ready," answered the President, mournfully; "each day, as I look over its events and incidents, as I think of those I have made happy, of those I have made miserable, I see that I might have been truer to my neighbor, truer to my God."